



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Scots Presbyterian Church is significant for its aesthetic qualities imparted by the colour and textures of the contrasting ashlar limestone walls and mellow red brick quoins, the soaring verticality of its form and the loftiness and pleasant textures of the timber roof construction pitted against the smooth walls of the interior space. (Criterion 1.1)

Scots Presbyterian Church is significant for its landmark quality standing as the dominant structure at the corner of South Terrace and Parry Street. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Scots Presbyterian Church is significant as the first Presbyterian church in Fremantle. (Criterion 2.2)

The congregation is significant as one of only six in Western Australia that declined amalgamation with the Uniting Church. As a result the place remains one of six Presbyterian churches in WA. (Criterion 2.2)

Scots Presbyterian Church was designed by J.J. Talbot Hobbs, a prominent Perth architect and community member of the time, responsible for many of Perth's notable buildings. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Scots Presbyterian Church has significance for the members of the Presbyterian Church in Fremantle from the 1890s to the present and

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

particularly to those members of the church who opposed amalgamation with the Uniting Church. (Criterion 4.1)

Scots Presbyterian Church contributes to the community's sense of place as a landmark on the corner of South Terrace and Parry Street and as a reminder of the rapid development of Fremantle associated with the 1890s gold rush. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Scots Presbyterian Church is representative of Federation Victorian churches in Western Australia. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

Scots Presbyterian Church is in good condition externally and internally. The hall needs internal painting.

The place has been well kept in the past with funds being expended on a new roof to replace the earlier deteriorated cladding.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

The original intention of the building is intact as changes that have taken place have not impacted on the integrity of the place.

The use is compatible, being very close to the original use.

The church is viable and the significant qualities are expected to be sustainable in the long term.

There is no physical barrier in the way of restoring the place.

Scots Presbyterian Church is considered therefore to have a high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The building fabric of the church is substantially intact. There have been changes involving the moving of the organ to its present position and the placing of a new roof cladding together with the introduction of steel rods at the feet of the trusses to counter the extra weight. Also there were changes to the hall to the north when the Parry Street extension was built.

Work involved in these changes has been in keeping with the significant values and the authenticity is considered to be high.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The supporting evidence has been prepared by consultants from the Centre for Western Australian History. The documentary evidence has been compiled by Julia Ball, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Pidgeon, Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Scots Presbyterian Church is a limestone church constructed for the Presbyterian community in Fremantle in 1890. It was the first Presbyterian Church in the Fremantle district.

In 1849, the Free Church of Scotland commissioned the Reverend David Shearer to establish Presbyterian services in Western Australia and for twelve years he was the minister of *St Andrews Church* in Pier Street, Perth. The Reverend Robert Hanlin arrived in Western Australia in 1886, from Glasgow, to work in conjunction with Rev. Shearer.¹

Rev. Hanlin had taken up duties in Fremantle, conducting services in the Oddfellows Hall in William Street (now demolished) and later in the supper room of the Town Hall. Hanlin, however, wanted to build a church and he set about raising funds. He sought financial assistance on a trip to the Eastern States and the Colonial Committee in Scotland granted a loan of £1,000 and an advance was made by a local bank.² He bought the South Terrace site for £208.

From the 1870s, Fremantle began to take on an air of permanence. The *Act for Establishing Municipalities 1871* prompted the formation of Fremantle Town Council and the Municipal Council was formed in 1883.³ Buildings were beginning to acquire verandahs and other decorative features. With the assistance of convict labour, roads were being paved. Civic amenities were provided such as the Mechanics' Institute and co-operative societies such as the Rechabites and Manchester Unity Oddfellows were established. From the 1880s, building styles became more sophisticated and began to reflect a need to adapt traditional styles to suit local weather conditions.

In 1890, the colony became self-governing. Gold was discovered in Coolgardie in 1892 and Kalgoorlie in 1893 and the economic, political and social effects of the goldrush were soon felt. It was at the beginning of a period of building expansion and development that *Scots Presbyterian Church* was constructed.

In June 1889, the first Certificate of Title for Fremantle Town Lot 1360, an area of one rood, eight perches (0.1212ha) on the corner of South Terrace and Parry (formerly Norfolk) Street, was issued to the Commissioners of the Presbyterian Church in Western Australia who purchased the land from the Government.⁴

¹ Paterson, J.G. (ed) *Stories of Scots Church, Fremantle, Western Australia* J.G. Paterson, 1982, p. 1.

² *ibid.*

³ Bosworth, M. & Hutchison, D. 'City of Fremantle: Thematic Historical Framework', prepared for Fremantle City Council, June 1995, pp. 65, 67, 71, 72.

⁴ Certificate of Title Vol. XXVII Fol. 355, 15 June 1889, Office of Titles, DOLA,

In March 1890, Fremantle City Council, at a special meeting approved plans for *Scots Presbyterian Church*.⁵ The laying of the foundation stone took place shortly afterwards on Wednesday, 26 March 1890 and was carried out by the Hon. John Forrest in the presence of a large gathering of people. In his address, Forrest noted that, 'the object of the new church to be erected in Fremantle was to promote the cause of Christianity in this far and distant country ...'⁶ A jar containing a record of the church and current newspapers was placed in the stone.

The architect was Mr. (later Sir) J.J. Talbot Hobbs, and the builders Messrs. J. Petrie and Co. The decorative painting was carried out by Mr. E. Bockelmann.⁷

Talbot Hobbs (1864-1938) was born in London. He worked as an architectural draftsman to a builder, John Hurst, with whom he migrated to Western Australia in 1887. He began work as a carpenter, but soon set up practice as an architect. Talbot Hobbs became a leader in the small community of architects in Perth. His successful design of the *Weld Club* (1891) led to a number of other commissions for important buildings in Perth and Fremantle. In 1905, he set up the firm Hobbs, Smith & Forbes in which he was the senior partner. Talbot Hobbs was also a committed soldier, pursuing a distinguished military career over his lifetime. His success as an architect and soldier made him an important public figure.⁸

Scots Presbyterian Church was officially opened on 26 November 1890 and the *West Australian* provided an extensive description of the building:

The vestry is situated at the north east end of the aisle and has been so arranged as to allow of [sic] removal when required. The nave is also arranged for further extension of the transepts and south aisle. The style of the building is Gothic, and it is constructed of the best local stone in irregular coursed work, with red brick moulded windows and door jambs or dressings, and with moulded brick ? rising from plaster and terra cotta corbels. The whole of the exterior stone and brickwork is brick pointed, in black and white mortar. The tower is very massive, and designed to be carried up 25 feet higher, at some future time. ... The roofs are covered with sawn Jarrah shingles (pugged underneath), with dormer ventilators in the roof of the nave. The interior of the church is rendered in stucco. The pews are of jarrah and karri pines varnished. The pulpit is of cedar richly moulded, the upper panels filled in with tracery all French polished, and is a splendid piece of work. The doors are of Singapore cedar. The windows are all filled in with cathedral tinted glass, supplied by Messrs. Goodlet and Smith, of Sydney. ... The gasfittings are only temporary, the permanent fittings having been ordered from England.⁹

Special mention was made of the garden areas:

The ground in front of the church has been neatly laid out with gravel paths, approaches, and grass plots, with shrubs, the whole being enclosed by an imposing masonry and ornamental iron fence, with two pairs of handsome wood and iron gates.¹⁰

⁵ Fremantle City Library Local History Collection, pamphlet collection, Scots Church, 726.585. The meeting was held on 7 March 1890.

⁶ *West Australian* 28 March 1890, p. 3.

⁷ *West Australian* 29 November 1890, p. 5.

⁸ Nairn, B & Serle, G. (eds) *Australian Dictionary of Biography Vol. 9: 1891-1939* Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1983, pp. 315-17.

⁹ *West Australian* 29 November 1890, p. 5.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

The church was designed to seat comfortably 250 people and the approximate cost of construction was £2,000.

In 1895, the Board of Management purchased the cottage (now demolished) adjacent to *Scots Presbyterian Church* for £12 5s 0d and it was occupied almost continuously by the church officer and his family.¹¹

In 1902, gas light was installed which, in 1906, was replaced with electric light.¹²

In 1911, *Scots Presbyterian Church* was completely re-roofed at a cost of £150.¹³

The stone hall was built onto the north-east end of *Scots Church* (date unknown) and subsequently timber additions were built onto the north-west side of the hall (now demolished) against the *Fremantle Markets* and onto the south-east side of the hall (now demolished).

Scots Presbyterian Church ran an active programme of church events and functions. There were three Sunday Schools, at Scots, North Fremantle and Beaconsfield, and there was also a Girls' Club, Christian Endeavour, Youth Clubs and Mission Activities. At various times the Hall was hired out for community activities such as dancing.¹⁴

In c. 1930 the timber shingles were replaced with asbestos shingles and painted iron.¹⁵

In 1975, the Church received a \$15,000 National Estate Grant for repairing and sealing the brickwork and repairing the electrical wiring. Funds were also set aside to give the spire new copper plating and the rood a new layer of asbestos shingles.¹⁶

On 22 June 1977, the Uniting Church of Australia was inaugurated with the amalgamation of most of the Presbyterian parishes, the Methodist Church and the Congregational Church.¹⁷ The inauguration reflected more than twenty years of negotiation, each church seeking to redress a decline in numbers. The transition, however, was not without its difficulties.

The Presbyterian Church allowed greater liberty in congregational terms and, because of the greater division within the Presbyterian community about the proposed Uniting Church, only sixty-four percent of congregations elected to go into the union. This varied from state-to-state, with Western Australia having the highest congregational uniting element (87%).¹⁸ However, *Scots Presbyterian Church* was one of only six

¹¹ Paterson, op. cit., p. 39.

¹² *Fremantle Gazette* 27 November 1990, p. 9.

¹³ Paterson, op. cit., p. 37.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ City of Fremantle Planning & Development file, Scots Church.

¹⁶ *West Australian* 1 September 1975.

¹⁷ Bentley, P. & Hughes, P. *The Uniting Church in Australia* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1996, p. 1.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 10.

churches in Western Australia which declined to join the Uniting Church and as a result remains a Presbyterian church.¹⁹

In November 1985, the wall around the Church was built.²⁰

In 1986, the extension to Parry Street brought about the resumption of church land on the south-east side of the site. This necessitated the demolition of the cottage and the timber additions on the south-east side of the stone hall. With some of the proceeds from the resumption, the church demolished the timber additions on the north-west side and constructed a new meeting room, kitchen and toilets.²¹

In 1988, the roof was cleaned and then painted in 1989.²²

In 1994, City of Fremantle planning approval was granted for the erection of a storage shed at the rear of the Church.²³

In 1996, the asbestos shingle roof cladding was replaced with terra cotta shingle pattern clay tiles. The pattern and colour were chosen to simulate the original jarrah shingles.²⁴ The re-roofing was made possible through a bequest by Scots Presbyterian Church life member, the late Helen Baillie.²⁵

In January 1999, *Scots Presbyterian Church* continues to be used for religious purposes.

¹⁹ Fremantle City Library Local History Collection, pamphlet collection, Scots Church file, 726.585, *Fremantle Gazette* 15 April 1981, n.p.

²⁰ Fremantle City Library Local History Collection, Scots Church file, L. Stevens, 13 November 1985.

²¹ Fremantle City Library Local History Collection, pamphlet collection, Scots Church, 726.585. Information provided by Sandy Small.

²² City of Fremantle Planning & Development file, Scots Church.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *Fremantle Herald* 10 August 1996.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Scots Presbyterian Church stands on the northern corner of South Terrace and Parry Street. On the eastern corner is a restaurant in the former synagogue complex on the south corner the stone beer garden walls of the Norfolk Hotel and on the west corner is the limestone walls of the Fremantle Technical School. To the west along South Terrace are the limestone walls of the Fremantle Markets. *Scots Presbyterian Church*, with its vertical emphasis, stands prominently in this relatively low rise environment.

The walls are of smooth faced ashlar limestone with contrasting red brick voussoirs and label moulds to the windows and quoins at the window reveals and the external angles of the walls and buttresses. The steeply pitched roof is clad with terra cotta shingle pattern tiles.

The principal elevation facing South Terrace has a main parapeted notched gable containing three large lancet windows, the centre one of which is the tallest. A dominant tower, with off-set buttresses, stands on the right hand or Parry Street side. The tower is square in plan up to the level of the notch in the gabled parapet where it steps in to form a squat shaft of smaller plan dimensions which truncates to form an octagonal shaft with a quoined lancet opening in each facet. On top of this shaft sits a tall octagonal steeple.

On the left hand side is a parapet gabled porch with angled buttresses containing a lancet entrance door. The lancet entrance door is repeated at the base of the tower, thus producing a feint at symmetry. The entrance porch and the tower are joined by a low lean-to roof over a wall containing two pairs of lancet windows. To the left of the porch is the parapeted wall of the aisle facade with offset buttresses and an octagonal finial at the extremity.

The Parry Street side of the church consists of the tower protruding forward at the south-west end and, at the north-east end, also protruding forward, a parapeted, gabled porch with angled buttresses with a door in a lancet opening with an aisle like lean-to the north which now accommodates the organ. Between the protrusions at the extremities of the elevation are two pairs of lancet windows in the high wall of the nave with a buttress between them.

A limestone walled hall with a corrugated iron clad gable roof has been added to the rear wall of the church. The ridge of the hall roof obscures the lower part of the centre of three lancet windows in the north-east facing parapeted gable which is a repeat of the parapeted gable facing South Terrace. The side walls of the hall have been built up to and shaped to the profile of the church buttresses. The wall facing Parry Street has been recently cut back clean and repointed. On the north-west side, between the hall and the adjacent stone wall of the Fremantle Markets a modern meeting room, kitchen and toilets have been built. These are of brickwork save for the exposed wall facing the courtyard to the north-east which is built in new limestone.

The north-west elevation of the church consists of the low wall of the aisle with buttresses four bays with a pair of lancet windows to the three bays of

the aisle. The vestry occupies the north-east bay. The north-west elevation of the meeting room and toilets is hard up against the stone wall of the Fremantle Markets.

The nave of the church is a lofty space with strong lighting from the large leadlight windows in the gables at each end. The nave and chancel are incorporated in one volume under the high pitched gable. The ceiling is pine boarded between closely spaced jarrah beams with three elaborately caved trusses spaced at even intervals. The trusses terminate on small wall brackets below the springing line of the roof. Metal ties have been introduced to connect the feet of the trusses, from one side of the nave to the other, at the level of the springing line in order to counteract the extra weight of the terra cotta tiles recently laid on the roof. The north-west side of the nave opens onto the aisle with a colonnade of stone columns supporting wide pointed arches. There is no aisle on the Parry Street side of the church.

The floor is covered with a blue patterned carpet. The walls are rendered and marked out to simulate ashlar stonework. The altar furniture is elaborately carved jarrah of recent origin.

To the south of the nave are three spaces stretching across the front of the building. At the south end is a square room under the tower which is entered off the yard facing South Terrace through the lancet door mentioned in the external description. To the north-west through an arch is a 1.5 metre wide passage connecting to the entry porch at the west end. The ceiling slopes with the lean-to roof, the walls are rendered and the floor is of tessellated tiles.

The vestry office occupies the northern corner of the church and is under the continuation of the aisle roof.

The interior of the hall is more austere with a timber floor and timber trusses with a boarded ceiling over supporting the roof. The walls are rendered and painted with the paint flaking off in places. There is a timber dado. There is a low stage at the north east end of the hall.

To the north-west of the hall is the meeting room with a suspended plaster tile ceiling and rendered and face brick walls and carpeted floor.

A kitchen and toilets open off the meeting room to the south-west.

Scots Presbyterian Church is well maintained and has recently been re-roofed with clay shingle tiles. These roughly approximate the previous shingles, although these were of a diagonal pattern. Early changes to the fabric are the addition of the church hall on the northern end of the Church. Later changes include the addition of the meeting room and kitchen and toilets to the west of the Church. Minor changes have occurred within the Church, one of which is the relocation of the organ.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

13.4 REFERENCES

Paterson, J.G. (ed) *Stories of Scots Church, Fremantle, Western Australia*
(J.G. Paterson, 1982).

National Trust Assessment Exposition, 1 April 1974

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
